WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Production of nitrogenous and phosphatic fertilizers

137. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in 1998-99, the 13 MTs of nitrogenous and phosphatic fertilizers produced fell short of consumption by over 20 percent; and

(b) if so, what actions Government are taking to achieve self-sufficiency in the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) Total production of nitrogenous and phosphatic fertilizers during 1998-99 was 13.6 million tonnes as against the consumption of 15.46 million tonnes, which fell short of consumption by 12 percent.

(b) India is almost self sufficient in urea with imports amounting to only about 2.8% of consumption in 1998-99.

In the case of phosphates, the paucity of domestic raw material constrains the attainment of any degree of self-sufficiency. Recognising this, a deliberate policy-mix has been adopted which involves the modulation of three options: (i) domestic production based on indigenous/imported rock phosphate and imported sulphur; (ii) domestic production based on imported intermediates, *viz.* ammonia and phosphoric acid; and (iii) import of finished fertilizer, *viz.* Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) and very rarely, Mono-Ammonium Phosphate (MAP) and Nitrogen Phosphate Potash (NPK) complexes. Roughly 66% of the requirement of phosphatic fertilizers is met through the first two options. Since indigenous rock phosphate supplies meet only 5—10% of the total requirement of P_20_5, phosphatic fertilizers produced in the country are essentially based on imported raw materials and intermediates.

There are no known commercially exploitable reserves of potash in the country and per force, the entire requirement of potassium

fertilizers for direct application as well as for production of complex fertilizers is met through imports.

Price rise of Life-saving Drugs

138. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the effect of price rise in life saving drugs on the poor people, who are suffering from T.B., and other dreaded diseases; and

(b) in what way Government propose to cope up with the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) Life saving nature of the drugs depends upon a particular situation and circumstance. The DPCO, 95 does not make a distinction between life saving drugs and other drugs. Changes in the price of drugs and medicines are bound to take place because of variation in the cost of inputs, changes in consumption norms and technology, etc. Treatment of T.B. is covered under a National Health Programme of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and medicines are distributed free to the needy, through the Government hospitals/dispensaries.

Lifting of Price control on the drug industry

139. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the domestic and multinational pharma companies have demanded lifting of price control on the drug industry?

(b) if so, what is the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) There have been representations made to the Government